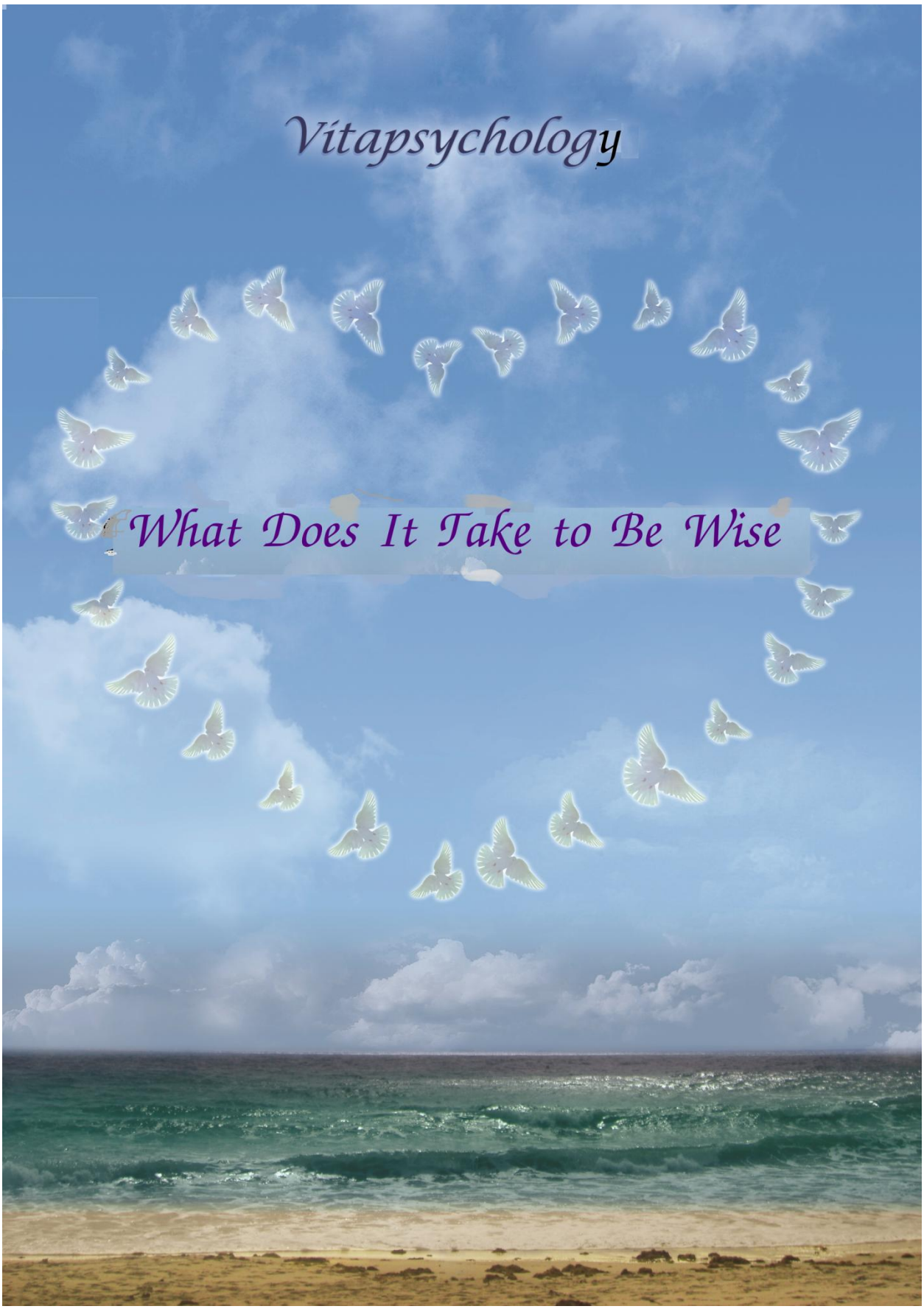
Vitapsychology
What Does It Take to Be Wise

Michail and Ludmila Nekrasov

Being Wise: What Does It Mean?

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Nekrasov, Michail and Ludmila.

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Preface

Wisdom has been explored for centuries by philosophers, psychologists, spiritual teachers, and thinkers from many cultures and traditions. Countless books and collections of insights offer reflections on what it means to live wisely. Yet despite this wealth of material, practical guidance on developing wisdom is often scattered, inconsistent, or difficult to apply in everyday life.

In particular, there is surprisingly little clear and systematic instruction on how to cultivate the qualities most closely associated with wisdom—such as self-mastery, inner calm, detachment from unhelpful emotions, compassion, and benevolence toward others.

This guide seeks to bridge that gap. Its purpose is to present the essential principles and practices of wisdom in a clear, practical, and accessible way, helping readers understand not only what wisdom is, but also how it can be developed and expressed in daily life.

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Introduction

Most of us can recognize wisdom when we see it. In situations where others become irritated, jealous, anxious, or offended, a wise person often remains calm, balanced, and clear-minded. Rather than reacting impulsively, they respond thoughtfully. They approach both themselves and the world with understanding and goodwill, and they are often able to find constructive solutions even in difficult circumstances.

Recognizing wisdom in others, however, is much easier than developing it within ourselves. This raises an important question: How does a person actually become wise? How do we move beyond admiring wisdom as an ideal and begin embodying it in our own lives?

A natural response is to turn to the many sources that discuss wisdom and human flourishing. Throughout history, philosophers, psychologists, spiritual teachers, religious traditions, and mystics have offered valuable insights into the nature of wisdom. Yet anyone who attempts to study these teachings soon encounters a challenge: the sheer volume and diversity of available material can be overwhelming.

Consider philosophy. The word itself means “love of wisdom.” Western, Eastern, Greek, Chinese, and Indian philosophical traditions contain profound reflections on human nature, ethics, knowledge, and the good life. Studying them can sharpen the mind, deepen understanding, and broaden perspective. Yet philosophy often focuses more on analyzing wisdom than on providing a straightforward path for cultivating it in everyday life.

A similar challenge exists in psychology, psychotherapy, and psychiatry. These fields offer valuable insights into human behavior, emotions, and mental well-being, but they encompass a vast range of theories, methods, and schools of thought. Even a lifetime of study would scarcely exhaust the contributions of influential thinkers such as Carl Jung and many others.

Religious and spiritual traditions also contain rich teachings on wisdom. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and their mystical branches—such as Hesychasm, Sufism, Yoga, and Kabbalah—have inspired countless seekers over the centuries. Yet fully exploring their sacred texts and contemplative practices can require years of dedicated study and reflection.

Buddhism deserves special mention because it explicitly aims at one of wisdom’s central goals*: liberation from suffering*. Its teachings provide a detailed framework for cultivating insight, compassion, and inner freedom. Nevertheless, mastering these teachings traditionally demands extensive study and practice, often extending over decades.

Beyond organized religions, many individuals have developed influential systems of thought centered on personal transformation and higher understanding. Figures such as George Gurdjieff, Sri Aurobindo, Jiddu Krishnamurti, Ramana Maharshi, Franklin Merrell-Wolff, Eckhart Tolle, Carlos Castaneda, and others each proposed their own interpretations of human nature, consciousness, and wisdom. While their contributions may be valuable, the abundance of differing perspectives presents a practical question: How does one navigate such a vast landscape of ideas and determine what is most useful?

The purpose of this guide is to address that challenge. Drawing on a wide range of sources, the authors have sought to identify, organize, and synthesize the elements most relevant to the development of wisdom. The goal is not to promote any particular

philosophy, religion, or school of thought, but to present the essential principles of wisdom in a clear, practical, and accessible form.

The following individuals and traditions contributed, directly or indirectly, to the development of this work:

Illustrator — Angelina Teodorovitsch (Ukraine)
Translator — Tetyana Murashko (Canada)
Svetlana Teodorovitsch (Ukraine)
Julija Sokolska (France)
Humorist — Michel Buzilo
You can contact us by email **mihlyus@mail.de**

The Prison of Suffering

The founder of the mystical-psychological teaching known as the Fourth Way, Georges Gurdjieff (1866–1949), would sometimes ask his students an unusual question:

"What is the most important thing for a prisoner who has been sentenced to death?"

The answer is simple: to escape.

If a person's life depends on escaping both prison and death, then everything else becomes secondary. Every action, every resource, and every effort only has value insofar as it helps achieve that escape. Even something as ordinary as obtaining a file to cut through prison bars becomes vitally important.

According to Gurdjieff, most people are prisoners in just such a prison—though they do not realize it. He called this prison “the Prison of Suffering”.

Fortunately, escape from this prison is not hopeless. On the contrary, many forces appear to support human growth, awakening, and liberation from suffering. Different traditions give these forces different names, including:

Our Original Nature (Zen Buddhism)
The Creator (theistic religions)
The Higher Self
The Evolutionary Force of Life
Planetary or Universal Intelligence
The Collective Unconscious
Visible and invisible teachers, guides, and mentors

Whatever name we choose, the underlying idea is the same: help is available to those who sincerely seek freedom from unnecessary suffering.

To understand whether we ourselves live within this "Prison of Suffering," it is useful to examine the many forms suffering can take. These range from mild discomfort and emotional distress to severe psychological disorders.

Common Forms of Suffering

1. States of Inner Chaos

Nervousness, mental and emotional confusion, imbalance, restlessness, distractibility, insecurity, excessive talkativeness, and similar conditions.

These states often drain our energy and make purposeful action difficult. In their most severe forms, they may resemble clinical **personality disturbances**.

2. States of Stress and Fear

Worry, anxiety, shock, tension, overstimulation, fear, panic, and persistent apprehension.

When prolonged, these states can develop into chronic psychological distress.

3. States of Isolation

Feelings of loneliness, emotional coldness, withdrawal from others, indifference, gloominess, and social disconnection.

These states reduce our sense of connection with life and other people.

4. States of Constrained Freedom

Shame, timidity, embarrassment, insecurity, submissiveness, feelings of oppression, excessive dependence on approval, greed, and resentment toward perceived limitations.

These states arise when we feel restricted, powerless, or unable to express ourselves authentically.

5. States of Loss

Resentment, regret, grief, disappointment, sadness, humiliation, sorrow, and emotional pain related to loss or failure.

Such experiences are a natural part of human life, yet they can become sources of prolonged suffering when not understood or processed constructively.

6. States of Despair

Meaninglessness, boredom, melancholy, hopelessness, apathy, pessimism, feelings of worthlessness, emptiness, and despair.

In extreme cases, these conditions can deepen into severe depression.

7. States of Conflict and Struggle

Dissatisfaction, irritation, anger, rage, suspicion, envy, jealousy, hostility, contempt, vindictiveness, and aggression.

These states often create suffering not only for ourselves but also for those around us.

A Measure of Wisdom

As you read this list, ask yourself:

Which of these states do I experience regularly?

The answer can serve as a practical measure of wisdom. The less frequently we are dominated by these forms of suffering, the greater our capacity for wisdom, balance, and inner freedom.

The purpose of this reflection is not to judge ourselves, but to increase self-awareness. Each recognized form of suffering points toward an area where growth and healing are possible.

In this sense, even unpleasant states can serve a valuable purpose. They act as signals, revealing where disorder exists within us and indicating what needs attention, understanding, and transformation.

"How long can we endure being tortured without pay?"

— Buzilo

Born according to plan,
Married according to plan,
And according to plan—ended up in prison.
— Buzilo

The Escape Plan: Leaving the Prison of Suffering

By now, the idea of the Prison of Suffering should be becoming clear. The question is: How much longer do you want to remain there? Is it not time to seek a way out?

This guide offers four powerful **tools**. Mastering them can help you free yourself from many forms of suffering while cultivating the qualities traditionally associated with wisdom.

These four tools are:

1. **Attention to What Is**
2. **Allowing What Is**
3. **Unity with What Is**
4. **Non-Attachment to What Life May Take Away**

As an added benefit, developing these qualities may bring greater clarity, resilience, effectiveness, self-awareness, and a deeper sense of inner freedom.

Among these four, Attention to What Is is the foundation. Without it, the other three cannot be fully developed or understood.

The names of these tools are not perfect descriptions of the states they represent, but they are intended to make the concepts easier to remember and practice.

Before exploring them in detail, take a moment to **experience** them directly.

1. Attention to What Is

Without attention, change is impossible. We cannot understand our suffering, learn from our experience, or respond wisely to life unless we first notice what is happening. Ideally, your whole being should become **attentive awareness**.

Imagine that, at this very moment, your attention is steady, clear, and fully present. You are observing your thoughts, emotions, sensations, and surroundings without distraction.

What do you notice?

What does it **feel** like to be fully attentive?

2. Allowing What Is

Allowing what is does not mean approving of everything or refusing to act when change is needed. Rather, it means acknowledging reality as it exists before resisting it, judging it, or wishing it were different.

Imagine observing life and existence as the **Creator** might from a higher, detached perspective —seeing both beauty and ugliness, success and failure, joy and sorrow, without immediately struggling against them.

From this perspective, everything that exists has a place within the larger process of life and may contain some lesson, purpose, or opportunity for growth.

For a moment, imagine yourself in a state of complete acceptance of what is.

What do you feel?

What changes in your experience?

3.Unity with What Is

Now imagine that you are not separate from life but an expression of it.

The people around you, the plants and animals, the sky, the stars, and the vast universe are all part of a single interconnected reality.

Imagine yourself as a wave arising on the Ocean of Life. For a time, the wave appears separate, but in truth it has never been apart from the ocean that gives it existence.

You and the Ocean of Life are one.

Its depth is your depth. Its power is your power.

As you contemplate this possibility, what do you feel?

What changes in your sense of self?

4.Non-Attachment to What Life May Take Away

Non-attachment does not mean indifference. It means appreciating what you have without becoming dependent upon it for your happiness or identity.

Imagine that you were once wealthy, respected, and successful. Then, through circumstances beyond your control, everything changed. You lost your status, possessions, and position.

Although the loss is real, you do not allow it to destroy your peace. Instead, you adapt to your new circumstances and continue living as wisely and effectively as you can.

This is the **spirit of non-attachment**.

Life may give, and life may take away. A wise person values both gain and loss as parts of the same journey.

Imagine yourself in this state.

What do you feel?

What remains when everything nonessential is gone?

These four tools form the foundation of the path that follows. By developing them, we gradually weaken the grip of suffering and strengthen the qualities associated with wisdom, freedom, and inner peace.

You walled yourself in — now you want to break free?

Good for you!— Buzilo

Implementing the Escape Plan

1. Attention to What Is

Psychology generally distinguishes between two forms of attention:

Involuntary attention — automatic attention that is drawn by external events, strong emotions, or instinctive reactions, which even cockroaches possess.

Voluntary attention — intentional, self-directed attention that we consciously choose to focus and sustain, which humans have in limited amounts.

The capacity for voluntary attention is closely associated with the brain's prefrontal cortex, which plays an important role in self-regulation, decision-making, and conscious control of behavior. Because voluntary attention enables us to observe and influence our thoughts, emotions, and actions, its development is one of the foundations of personal growth and freedom from suffering.

For thousands of years, human beings have explored ways of strengthening this capacity. Practices aimed at cultivating intentional attention appear in ancient traditions such as Yoga, Buddhism, and contemplative Christianity, and continue to be studied by modern psychologists and neuroscientists.

Various terms have been used to describe different aspects of this skill, including:

Awareness
Mindfulness
Concentration
Presence
Witnessing
Observation
Meditation
Wakefulness

Despite their different names, all of these terms are rooted in the same fundamental capacity: voluntary (intentional) attention.

The Goal of Continuous Attention

Among the works that have particularly influenced our understanding of attention are Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and the teachings presented in Raja Yoga.

These traditions describe a path toward increasing mastery over the mind—our thoughts, emotions, impulses, and habitual reactions. According to these teachings, greater stability of attention leads to greater freedom, clarity, and self-mastery (leaving the “prison of suffering”).

Many spiritual traditions associate profound states of awakening with sustained awareness. From this perspective, AWAKENING can be understood as a state of continuous presence—being fully conscious of each moment rather than living mechanically or automatically.

According to Patanjali and other enlightened masters, the awakened person retains personal consciousness after the death of the physical body.

For a materialistically minded person, this may be hard to believe. But belief is not mandatory — it is enough to know that the possibility of consciousness persisting after death itself is a transcendent motivation, inspiring many to master the tool of continuous attention.

Another important possibility highlighted in the Yoga Sutras is the acquisition of siddhis (psychic and magical powers) as a result of prolonged and uninterrupted concentration. The Yoga Sutras describe which siddhis a person gains depending on the object of concentration. In our own practice, we have confirmed that this holds true when concentration is maintained continuously for three days.

The book Raja Yoga by Ramacharaka also greatly influenced our understanding of who we really are. It consistently presents the idea that our body, sensations, thoughts, emotions, and dreams are not our true “Self,” since they can be observed. Our real “Self” is the observer — pure attention.

When the "I" and the memory associated with it are absent, we are effectively living in a state of sleep. Much of our psychological and energetic suffering arises from this unconsciousness.

"And coming back, he found them asleep again."

The Sleeping Owner

George Gurdjieff illustrated this idea through a famous metaphor.

He compared a human being to a carriage pulled by horses. The carriage represents the body, the horses represent emotions and impulses, and the coachman represents the thinking mind. Yet the true owner—the conscious presence capable of directing the journey—is asleep.

When awareness is absent, thoughts, emotions, habits, and impulses take control. Life becomes reactive rather than conscious.

This image is supported by a fundamental theorem from the “Theory of Systems”. This theorem states that if a system lacks a control center, it will inevitably descend into chaos and eventually cease to exist. Our body has a control center—the central nervous system. However, the control center for our mental functions (instincts, mind, emotions, dreams, drives, etc.) remains underdeveloped or dormant in most people.

What exactly is this control center?

P.V. Simonov, a leading expert in brain state prediction, considered this center to be the "master of mental functions" and, from a physiological perspective, the "third signaling system."

Roberto Assagioli, founder of psychosynthesis, called this center the "Higher Self" within a person.

Awakened mystics—such as Ramana Maharshi, Sri Pundja, Robert Adams, Avatar Kalki, Ramesh Balsekar, Ken Wilber, and others—assert that this center is the embodiment of Infinite Cosmic Consciousness within human beings.

To clarify this concept, consider the following analogy: imagine your capacity for attention as a lightbulb connected to the “Universal Power Station,” which supplies energy to the consciousness of all living beings.

We have the ability to turn this lightbulb on when we wish, illuminating, energizing, and organizing the activity of our mental functions. We can also directly identify ourselves with this Lightbulb and the Power Station itself, with its unlimited energy resources. Because most people do not use these abilities, they are forced to live in the “prison of suffering” without light.

In recent decades, psychologists and neuroscientists have studied the effects of mindfulness and meditation practices on the brain and body. Research summarized by Richard Davidson and Daniel Goleman in Altered Traits suggests that regular attention-training practices can improve emotional regulation, resilience, well-being, and certain aspects of physical health.

Davidson’s laboratories have also studied the effects of “mindfulness meditation” developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn—a widely applied method in American and European medicine for stress reduction. This meditation is based on non-judgmental awareness of whatever enters our field of perception at any moment (sensations, thoughts, images, etc.). It is typically practiced daily in clinical settings for up to 45 minutes. For a deeper understanding and the origins of this meditation, you can refer to Jon Kabat-Zinn’s book Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life.

Research clearly demonstrated the benefits of this meditation. Practitioners showed a 5–6% improvement in immune system function. Many brain processes became more stable and coherent.

Now, imagine what results might emerge if awakened masters were studied in similar laboratories. This was a long-standing dream of Davidson’s team, but it was difficult to carry it through. Only in 2002, with the support of the Dalai Lama, was the first awakened yogi brought to the lab. The findings astonished the scientific community and were published in over 1,100 scientific articles. The yogi’s brain activity, during focused

attention, was approximately 25 times greater than that of ordinary individuals under similar conditions.

By 2015, when 21 more awakened yogis joined the study, it became clear that these results were not an isolated case. The research consistently showed similar extraordinary brain activity among awakened practitioners.

Moreover, it was observed that the aging of these yogis' brains was significantly slowed down, and that it was nearly impossible to throw them off balance or to disrupt their joyful, life-affirming mood. These are truly the ones who have escaped the "prison of suffering"!

The ability to direct and sustain attention may be one of the most valuable capacities available to us. It requires no special equipment, no expensive resources, and no extraordinary circumstances.

It is available in every moment.

The more consistently we cultivate conscious attention, the more capable we become of understanding ourselves, regulating our reactions, and reducing unnecessary suffering.

In this sense, attention is not merely the first tool on the path—it is the foundation upon which all the others rest.

The Practice of Continuous Presence

Among the many methods for developing mindfulness and attention, we recommend what we have found to be one of the simplest and most accessible: the practice of continuous presence.

This approach requires no complicated techniques, visualizations, or constant monitoring of thoughts and emotions. Instead, your effort is directed toward one thing only: **maintaining a steady sense of conscious presence.**

Think of it as keeping the lamp of awareness lit.

The Practice

1. Begin with a simple activity.

While walking, sitting, watching television, or performing another routine task, gently direct your attention to your breathing. Notice the inhalation and exhalation. Feel the movement of your chest or abdomen as you breathe.

2. Shift from the object to attention itself.

After several minutes, release your focus on the breath while remaining awake and attentive. Allow attention to stay active without attaching it to any particular object. This state is what we call **presence**.

The lamp is now lit.

3. Maintain the sense of presence.

Continue carrying this awareness with you throughout the day, regardless of what you are doing or thinking. At first, the state will be lost frequently. Naturally, due to lack of experience, the bulb may go out. Turn it back on again and again... until the state of presence becomes your natural state.

This may take anywhere from three months to several years. Brain restructuring is not a quick process.

4. Rest in the experience of awareness.

Rather than identifying completely with passing thoughts, emotions, or roles, begin to recognize the awareness that observes them.

You may find it helpful to reflect on the idea:

"I am presence."

As identification with habitual mental patterns softens, many unnecessary psychological struggles may also begin to lose their grip.

5. Expand your sense of presence.

When the practice becomes familiar, explore a broader sense of awareness through the reflection:

"I am silent, all-encompassing presence."

Whether understood spiritually, philosophically, or psychologically, this exercise can foster a deeper sense of spaciousness, connectedness, and inner freedom.

Some practitioners may find it helpful to begin directly with this final reflection.

Possible Benefits

People who practice sustained attention and presence often report benefits such as:

a) Accessibility of continuous mindfulness practice to anyone (developed or undeveloped, young or old, poor or rich, good or bad);
b) Psychological healing and psychological invulnerability;
c) Acquisition of siddhis (magical or psychic abilities);
d) Improved memory and enhanced capacity for further learning and growth;
e) Significant slowing of brain aging;
f) Connection to information from the supraconscious sphere;
g) Protection from the whims of fate and assistance from Higher Powers;
h) Preservation of consciousness after physical death (possible).

Conclusion:

Light the lamp and don’t let it go out — liberation will come by itself!

2. Allowing What Is

After what has been said, it may seem to you that leaving the "prison of suffering" is quite simple. But those experienced in developing continuous mindfulness know how difficult it actually is.

The thing is, "illiterate programmers" have programmed us to live primarily with transient, vulnerable values. Meanwhile, our mind continuously serves these values.

The mechanisms of emotional reactions to these values, as well as the mechanisms of continuous thinking, have been deeply automated. Usually, they completely absorb the energy of our true Self — our attention. Therefore, the attempt to place our real Self on the throne succeeds only for a short time.

To more easily acquire the skill of continuous presence, it is desirable to weaken the mechanism of painful reactions to problems related to our vulnerable values.

The calmer and more balanced we are, the easier it is for us to practice continuous presence.

Here are some accessible ways to solve this task. The first lies in the guiding phrase: "**Allowing what is.**" (Synonyms for "allowing" include agreement, humility, acceptance, non-resistance, meekness, serenity.)

The essence of this phrase is that we look at life and existence as if from the outside (like the Creator) and do not oppose what exists — whether good or bad, beautiful or ugly, war or peace, angels or demons, death, lies, injustice, etc. If this is difficult, you can accompany this view with the thought that everything that exists has its useful side; otherwise it would not exist.

This kind of general thought somewhat reduces our inner turmoil and thus makes the practice of continuous presence easier.

Now, let's come down from the heavens to earth.

In the world of spiritual seeking, two related guiding principles that help us become more relaxed and calm have long existed:

1. **Unconditional acceptance of what we cannot change or what is extremely difficult to change**.

It would seem simple. For an animal, this is not difficult. A human, even the one who understands that the vast majority of things cannot be changed, may, nevertheless, feel sadness and yearning because he is unable to visit other planets in our galaxy, travel to the past or future, or livy in a healthy body for millions of years. Many events can irritate or annoy human being — weather, barking dogs, pesky flies, the shape of someone's nose, various smells, etc. Most often, we are especially irritated by certain deeply ingrained traits of others' character. Yet, the majority of us do not realize that it is practically impossible to change another person's character unless they want to change themselves. Nevertheless, attempts to reshape those around us continue throughout life, with each person trying to alter others for their own convenience, wasting time, effort, and energy in vain.

2. **Absence of any resistance to the necessary efforts through which we maintain, protect, and expand our life positions.**

These are the efforts required to maintain health, organize daily life, pursue self-development, and more. It is impossible to avoid struggles with illness, aging, injustice, crime, and similar challenges, even while philosophically accepting their right to exist.

Monitor your resistance to these necessary efforts and eliminate it. "**If it must be done, I will do it without tension, easily and freely!"**

To release internal resistance to our efforts, there is a well-known mantra: **"I SURRENDER, I SURRENDER!"**

Try to accompany your efforts to maintain continuous presence with this mantra. We hope you will find it much easier to practice.

An important factor in reducing anxiety and worry is also achieving continuous presence in life.

If the center of gravity in life shifts to this invulnerable value, then the distress over all transient values will significantly lessen. This kind of solution to many problems is cleverly reflected in Georgy Oster's children's rhyme:

The main thing in your life may be a tiny thing,
Just trust that nothing else could greater meaning bring.
Then neither cold nor heat will drive your joy away,
And you'll chase foolish dreams in bliss the livelong day.

Beyond the methods described above for reducing excess tension and anxiety, there are many psychophysical techniques and practices available worldwide. Interested readers can find them in specialized literature. Here, we have focused only on those methods that we consider necessary and sufficient for achieving continuous presence.

To conclude this section, it is worth noting that some awakened teachers view supreme **calm**—Peacefulness, Silence, Nirvana, or Nothingness—as the ultimate aim of spiritual seeking.

Yet one question remains: Who is the one that is aware of this Silence or Nirvana?

3. Unity with What Is

Let us suppose that you have already become calmer, yet maintaining a state of continuous vigilance remains difficult.

This may be because you practice presence (continuous mindfulness) primarily for your own benefit.

In that case, you are like a cell in a living organism that, having forgotten the organism as a whole, works mainly for itself. Naturally, the organism has little reason to invest energy in a cell that contributes little to its well-being. As a result, such a cell may lack the energy required for a significant leap in awareness.

It is therefore important to remember that we do not exist separately from the world. We are always integral parts of something greater than ourselves—a family, a community, a nation, humanity, the planet, or even the creative force of the Universe. By serving the well-being of this greater whole, we open ourselves to receiving energy from it in return.

The practice of continuous mindfulness becomes much easier when it is dedicated to something beyond oneself—for example, to loved ones, humanity, or the planet. In such cases, it can be accompanied by the thought: I am an inseparable part of humanity. If I become more awakened, humanity becomes a little more awakened through me. If I free myself from the prison of suffering, I may help others find freedom as well.

It is worth noting that one of the central ideals of Buddhism is not only personal liberation from suffering but also helping all beings move toward liberation.

Another source of energetic isolation is the belief that the "I" is separated from the world by the physical body.

To correct this misunderstanding, we can recognize that the body and all its components were not created by us. In a sense, we have merely appropriated the body. It belongs first and foremost to nature, life, the Universe, or the Higher Intelligence.

Therefore, remind yourself as often as possible that you are not only a temporary expression of the Universe—you are also the Universe itself, seeing, hearing, feeling, and acting through this particular body and mind.

Another practice for cultivating a sense of unity is to feel or imagine that everything you see, hear, and experience is part of yourself. For example, while walking, you may imagine that the road is an extension of your legs, the surrounding space an extension of your body, and beyond that, the Earth, the sky, and the stars are all aspects of the same greater reality of which you are a part. When choosing objects for this practice, it is best to focus on things that embody life, growth, and harmony rather than decay or destruction.

What other approaches can foster a sense of unity with life?

Many spiritual traditions encourage the cultivation of qualities such as gratitude, goodwill, kindness, participation, brotherhood, sympathy, compassion, mercy, empathy, humanity, friendliness, sensitivity, attentiveness, meditative absorption (dhyana), unconditional love, deep role immersion (as found in the performing arts), and similar states of consciousness.

Please don't be intimidated. It is impossible to grasp the ungraspable. To achieve the goals we have proposed, it is sufficient to cultivate just a few simple states of unity with life: **gratitude, goodwill, and occasional participation.**

There is hardly anything simpler than gratitude! At the very least, be grateful for the gift of life itself, for the opportunity to explore this world and its inhabitants, or for the lessons life continuously provides, helping us become wiser. For example, in Judaism it is often emphasized that many of a person's noble qualities grow out of gratitude—toward the Creator, parents, teachers, and nature.

There is also nothing difficult about goodwill. It is easy to wish health and well-being to our neighbors, our country, the planet, and wisdom to all humanity.

Likewise, offering help to a person, animal, or even a plant in a moment of need is usually within our power.

"But what about unconditional love and compassion?" you may ask.

In our view, the full cultivation of compassion and unconditional love—as advocated by certain schools of Buddhism, Christianity, and other spiritual traditions—is truly beneficial only when accompanied by sufficient wisdom and awakening. Otherwise, the compulsive urge to save and help everyone at all times can easily become harmful, both to oneself and to others.

In concluding this section, we would like to emphasize that our approach to liberation from the "prison of suffering" places primary importance on the development of continuous mindfulness, which naturally deepens into all-encompassing Presence. Some awakened teachers, by contrast, place greater emphasis on compassion and unconditional love.

Our reasoning is simple: if an awakened person experiences compassion or unconditional love, one question still remains—Who is aware of these experiences? Obviously, it is the One who always IS—that is, PRESENCE itself.

4. Non-attachment to what life may take away from us.

Another obstacle to achieving continuous presence is excessive attachment.

In Buddhism, non-attachment—to all things, including life itself and even to non-attachment itself—is considered one of the central principles of spiritual development.

In our approach, however, there is no need to eliminate every attachment, which could number in the thousands. Nor is it necessary to become completely detached

from everything. It is sufficient to weaken attachments to the point where they no longer significantly interfere with maintaining a state of continuous presence.

Consider money and personal documents. A certain degree of attachment to them is entirely reasonable! Imagine that your money and documents were stolen. Naturally, you would feel upset. A wise person would also be upset—but only briefly. Such discomfort would simply indicate that these valuables had not been properly protected. Appropriate conclusions would be drawn, and the upset would fade within a few minutes.

How long would you remain upset?

It is impossible to list all the things to which we may become attached and which life may one day take away. Among the most common are material wealth, health, family and loved ones, social status, personal ambitions, comfort, physical pleasures, friendships, freedom, orderliness, justice, approval from others, accumulated resources, and the desire to serve people.

All these values are vulnerable because they do not depend entirely on our will. They can improve or deteriorate at any moment. We call these attachments "vulnerable".

To reduce attachment to such vulnerable values, we suggest placing greater emphasis on what we call invulnerable values:

a) Development of voluntary attention;
b) Allowing things to be as they are;
c) Unity with what is;
d) Development of imagination;
e) Dream control (lucid dreaming).

The first three have already been discussed in previous sections and, as we have noted, form part of the foundation of wisdom. The last two are more closely related to the development of human abilities and potential.

Developing Imagination

Let us look more closely at this value. In psychology, the form of imagination we are discussing is known as reproductive imagination. This is the ability to intentionally recreate sounds, images, sensations, emotions, and states within the mind.

The method for developing imagination is quite simple. For example, if visual imagination is weak, begin by carefully studying a simple object—its color, shape, and spatial arrangement. Then close your eyes and attempt to recreate it mentally.

At first, the imagined image will differ from the actual object. However, with practice, mental representation can become increasingly vivid and detailed. In the same manner, it is useful to develop auditory (sounds), kinesthetic (sensations), and emotional imagination.

A well-developed imagination can improve memory, positively influence physical and emotional states, aid in mental training, and provide a powerful tool that allows you to influence events and circumstances, and effectively program and reprogram the subconscious and superconscious mind.

Various traditions and disciplines, including psychology, psychotherapy, acting, neuro-linguistic programming, shamanic practices, and the Silva Method—have made extensive use of imaginative techniques. **For our purposes, imagination serves as a valuable aid in accelerating the process of awakening.**

Dream Control

Another valuable ability is the art of dream control, often called lucid dreaming.

In essence, lucid dreaming is continuous presence within the dream state. Just as continuous presence in waking life opens new possibilities, conscious awareness during dreams can provide unique opportunities for exploration and self-discovery.

Extensive information on lucid dreaming is available in books and online resources. Since our own experience in this area is limited, we will not explore the subject further here.

A Practical Reflection

As an exercise, imagine that life has taken away almost everything you possess. It has left you only your conscious awareness and the minimum needed for survival. Perhaps you are completely alone, confined to a solitary room, or living with severe physical limitations.

"How fortunate you are," we might say.

You are free from countless distractions and concerns. You can devote yourself to exploring higher states of consciousness, seeking the nature of awareness, and traveling through the vast landscapes of dreams.

These are values that no circumstance can truly take from you. Only death appears capable of doing so—and if there is no experiencer, then there are no problems to experience.

Fortunately, the likelihood of such extreme circumstances is relatively small. More often, life gradually takes things away from us as we grow older.

When that happens, and sorrow arises, remember there are still values that life cannot take away!

" The inner turmoil of the wise is incomprehensible"

— Buzilo

What Makes a Person Wise?

As we have seen, awakening is theoretically quite simple: achieve continuous awareness of each moment of existence, and you are awakened.

Wisdom is far more challenging. In fact, complete wisdom may be impossible. To be fully wise, one would have to know everything, understand everything, feel everything, and perhaps even be capable of everything.

What we can do is continually move from lesser wisdom to greater wisdom—and that, in itself, is a wise way to live.

So, what characterizes a wise person?

1. A wise person has either mastered, or is steadily mastering, the four tools for liberation from suffering described earlier.
2. Their primary goal is to preserve, improve, and develop life within the limits of their abilities. By helping others become wiser, they ultimately help themselves.
3. Learning is a way of life for them. They continuously develop skills, knowledge, and understanding. As a result, boredom and depression find little room to grow.
4. They are grateful for the gift of life and for the opportunity to explore this remarkable world.

5. Their life balances opposites harmoniously: activity and rest, overwork and recovery, individuality and community, firmness and gentleness, logic and intuition.
6. They live as though miracles are possible! This outlook makes life more joyful and open-ended. Those who believe miracles are impossible rarely encounter any.
7. To avoid being a fool they prefer learning from the mistakes of others rather than repeatedly making the same mistakes themselves.
8. Humor is one of their favorite tools. It can momentarily free people from the “prison of suffering” and rigid patterns of thought.
9. They maintain reserves of energy, strength, and resources for unexpected opportunities and challenges.
10. Every loss and every failure contains a lesson. Therefore, setbacks become opportunities for growth rather than reasons for despair.
11. Like a skilled chess player, they prepare in advance for important situations, decisions, and encounters.
12. They do not think in terms of sin, but in terms of misunderstanding. Many people pursue forms of “happiness” that only appear to be happiness.
13. They are not dependent on praise or blame, making them difficult to manipulate.
14. They long ago moved beyond the constant struggle between confidence and doubt. In most situations, they act naturally and appropriately.
15. They do not suffer from envy, because everything they truly need for happiness—independent of external circumstances—they already possesses.
16. They do not suffer from jealousy, because possessiveness is a sign of dependence rather than self-sufficiency.
17. They are not easily offended. They do not hold a grudge against a dog for biting them or a tiger for trying to eat them; likewise, they understand that people act according to their nature and level of awareness. At the same time, they do not place themselves in harm's way.
18. Their guiding principles are Benefit and the Spirit of Life's Evolution. As a result, they may sometimes appear religious and at other times atheistic.
19. They are not a fanatical crusader for justice. In a world where few people strive for wisdom or higher states of consciousness, complete victory over injustice is unlikely. Therefore, they focus on what can realistically be improved.
20. They avoid one-sided views of life. When someone says, "Everything is God's will," they reply, "Then God's will includes our acting independently." When someone says, "Everything is relative," they answer, "Then that statement must also be relative." When someone says, "We must accept everything as it is," they respond, "Then we must also accept non-acceptance." Thus, they always preserve freedom of choice.
21. The wise person keeps a "fool's mask" close at hand, for fools are sometimes permitted freedoms that the wise can only dream of.
22. They are not restricted to any single method of influencing a situation. Depending on what is beneficial, they may use silence, enthusiasm, humor, blunt language, sincere praise, or firm criticism. Without losing their inner balance, they can appear offended, guilty, jealous, or angry when the situation requires it. They can intensify a situation, calm it, redirect it, or simply walk away from it. In spiritual traditions, such people are often called MASTERS.

23. Death is their wise advisor, constantly reminding them that awakening should not be postponed until tomorrow.
24. **Their worldview is open and democratic**. This allows them to enter any system of belief, philosophy, or science without conflict or attachment. As a result, they are free from being bound by any belief.

"God sees everything. He even sees the democrats!"

Buzilo

Democratic Worldview

What is an open—or democratic—worldview?

It is the recognition that every viewpoint contains some degree of truth, usefulness, or insight. This applies equally to scientific and objective perspectives, philosophical systems, religious beliefs, and even the imaginative visions that may arise in a child's mind.

To illustrate this, consider some of the many ways people have understood God:

1. God does not exist. (Atheism)
2. God is the all-powerful Creator. (Christianity, Islam, Judaism)
3. God is the Universe itself, possessing mind and feeling, of which we are microscopic parts. (Spinoza, panpsychism)
4. God is all-pervading Consciousness.
5. God has a God. A planetary god has a solar-system god, who has a galactic god, who has a universal god, who has a god of the multiverse, and so on.
6. God is the evolutionary spirit of life, urging it toward greater development. In systems theory and synergetics, this tendency is sometimes described as the principle of self-organization.
7. God is love, encouraging life to preserve and multiply itself.
8. God is all-pervading silent Being.
9. God is Reality itself, beyond the limits of logical language.
10. "I don't know." This may be a child's simple honesty—or the position of a sincere researcher who acknowledges that the question has not yet been fully explored.

Now let us ask: Which concept of God is most beneficial for our psychological well-being and our relationship with life?

Our answer is this: the most useful position is one that preserves our freedom to respond to any conception of God with "Yes," "No," or "I don't know," depending on the situation and our level of understanding.

For example, Buddha sometimes answered “Yes,” sometimes “No,” and sometimes responded with silence, as a sign that this phenomenon is beyond expression.

In philosophy, this approach to seeking truth is often called pragmatism: the value of an idea is judged not only by whether it is theoretically true, but also by how it functions in life.

"But what about objective truth?" you may ask.

In this case, most likely, objective truth ultimately coincides with what proves most beneficial and workable as confirmed by the quantum view of the world based on discoveries in quantum mechanics.

What is certain, however, is that our inner psychological and spiritual condition has a more immediate impact on the quality of our lives than any particular theory about reality.

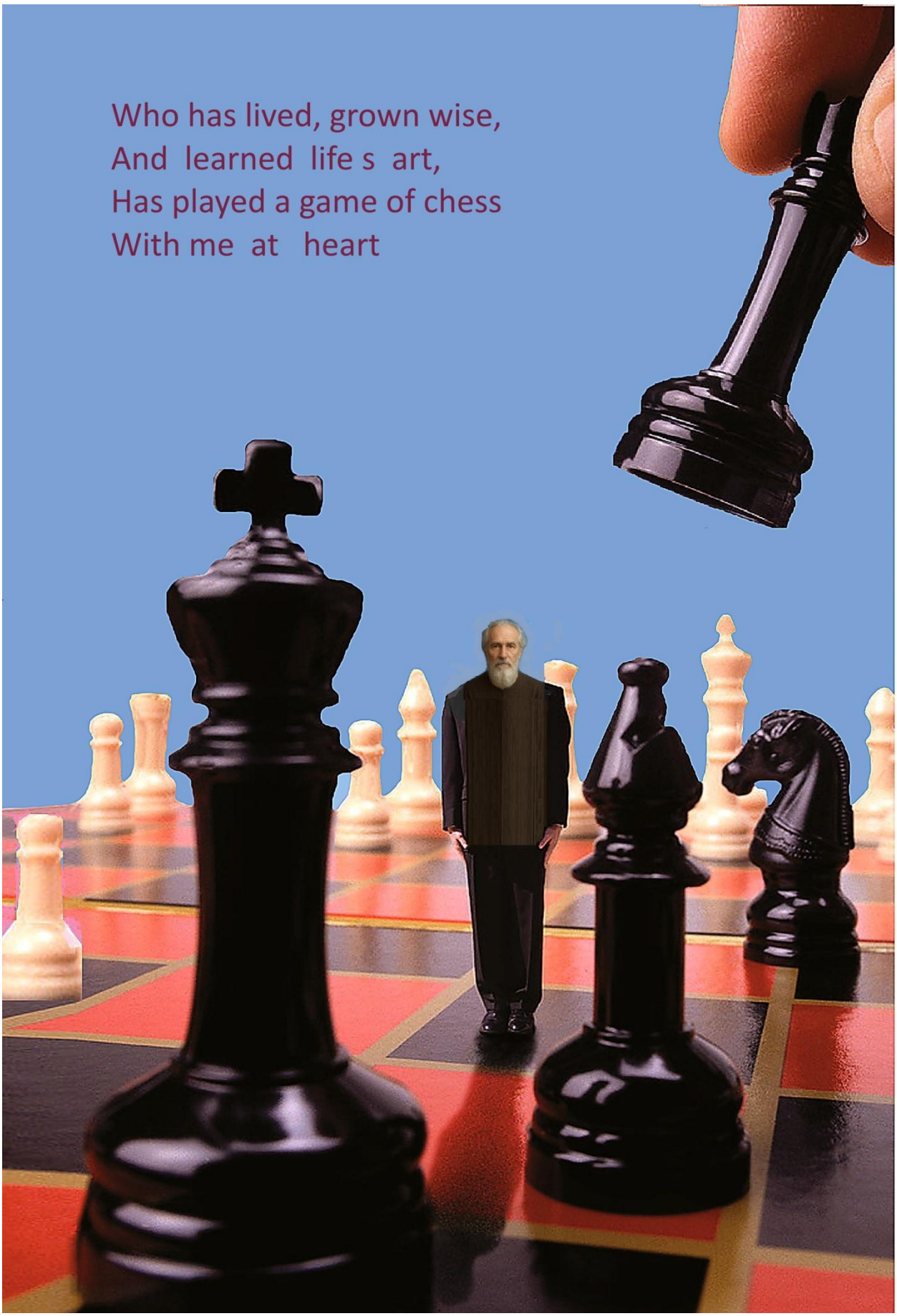
Conclusion

As you can see, becoming wise does not require mastering vast amounts of information. What matters most is understanding a few essential principles and making a sincere effort to apply them in daily life.

The four tools presented in this guide—Attention to What Is, Allowing What Is, Unity with What Is, and Non-Attachment—provide a practical foundation for reducing suffering and cultivating wisdom. Their value lies not in merely understanding them intellectually, but in practicing them consistently.

For readers who wish to go further, we also recommend exploring methods for healing and transforming emotions and emotional states, as presented in Vitapsychology (pp. 124–183 Russian language). The material in these chapters is practical, accessible, and complements the ideas discussed in this guide. The book can be downloaded from the website: https://www.twirpx.com

Have a safe trip!


Who has lived, grown wise,
And learned life s art,
Has played a game of chess
With me at heart